



ABSTRACT

The present invention overcomes the shortcomings of the afore-mentioned prior art devices and meets the afore-mentioned needs by providing an apparatus and method for accurately sealing a multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip to a web of flexible film in an airtight manner. Moreover, the inventive apparatus and method is capable of repeatedly performing the steps necessary to seal the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip to the web of flexible film with high manufacturing throughout and low cycle times. Generally, the apparatus and method utilize the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip having airtight splotch seals fused in a series along desired lengths of the zipper tape. The multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip is dispensed through a feeding mechanism and, when an optical sensor detects one of the splotch seal portions of the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip, a desired length of multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip is advanced over an elevator platform. A knife is then signaled to descend and sever the advanced portion of multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip, which is thus deposited onto the elevator platform. As the selected portion of the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip is being positioned and deposited onto the elevator, the web of flexible film is being positioned above the platform. A sealing head is then positioned over the web of flexible film, while at the same time the elevator platform is driven upwardly so that the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip portion positioned thereon comes into contact with the web of flexible film. The heat passing through the web of flexible film from the sealing head is sufficient to seal the peripheral portions of the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip section to the web of flexible film, thereby creating an airtight seal between the multi-purpose reclosable zipper strip portion and the web of flexible film.